

Up to 4+	10	11	7	1
5 to 6a+	16	30	41	7
6b to 7a	7	10	11	14
7a+ and up	4	4	4	3

Renowned for high-quality, sun-baked face-climbing, Sainte Victoire has long been a forcing ground for climbers in the Aix area. They pushed the standards of free-climbing up these near-blank faces to amazing levels; the occasional Brits who called in to sample the delights of the area were well impressed. When the time came to upgrade the fixed gear on the cliff, consultation with many of the first ascensionists led to the decision to rebolt the routes but to retain their original feel! This sparse bolting remains a notable feature of the area, arrive with your bold head on and consider starting at a lower level than back home. A small rack of wires might be worth considering. The cliffs are criss-crossed with a great selection of climbs, both single and multi-pitch, pretty much across the grade spectrum.

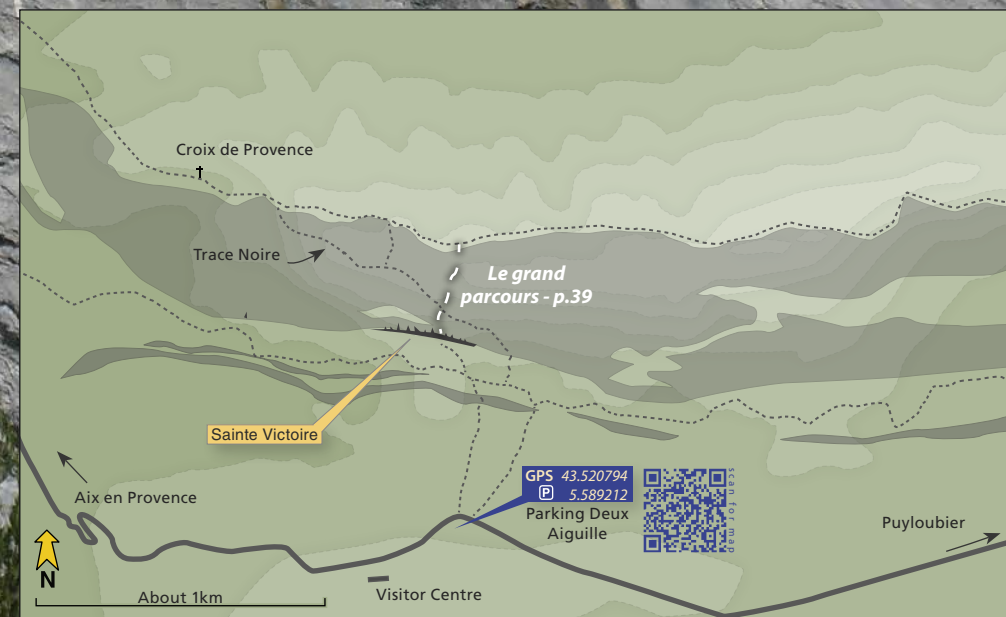
### Approach

Aix en Provence is on a direct TGV route from Paris, and Sainte Victoire is an easy 10 minute drive (or hitch) from here. If arriving by car, the Autoroute du Soleil (A7)/La Provençal (A8) allows access from the north and the west, whereas La Provençal (A8) also offers access from the east. From the coast the A51/52 motorways link up with the E8. These are all toll roads.

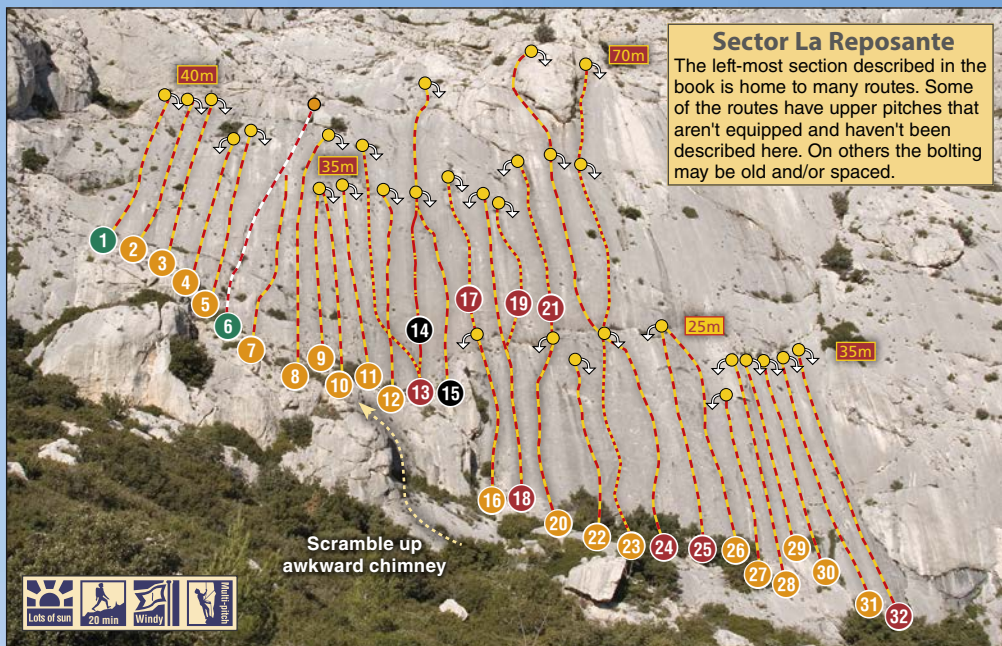
If arriving by air, the closest major airports are Marseilles and Toulon, with Nîmes and Nice a little further away. There are several parking spots below the crag - the best is Parking Deux Aiguilles which is just east of the visitor centre. From here there are several tracks that lead up to the base of the wall.

### Conditions

The south facing rock at Sainte Victoire make the perfect mid-winter sun venue, with the rock tilted at just the right angle to maximise the rays. In contrast, summers here are unbearably hot. The crags dry rapidly, but there is no shelter to be had from rain or the Mistral.







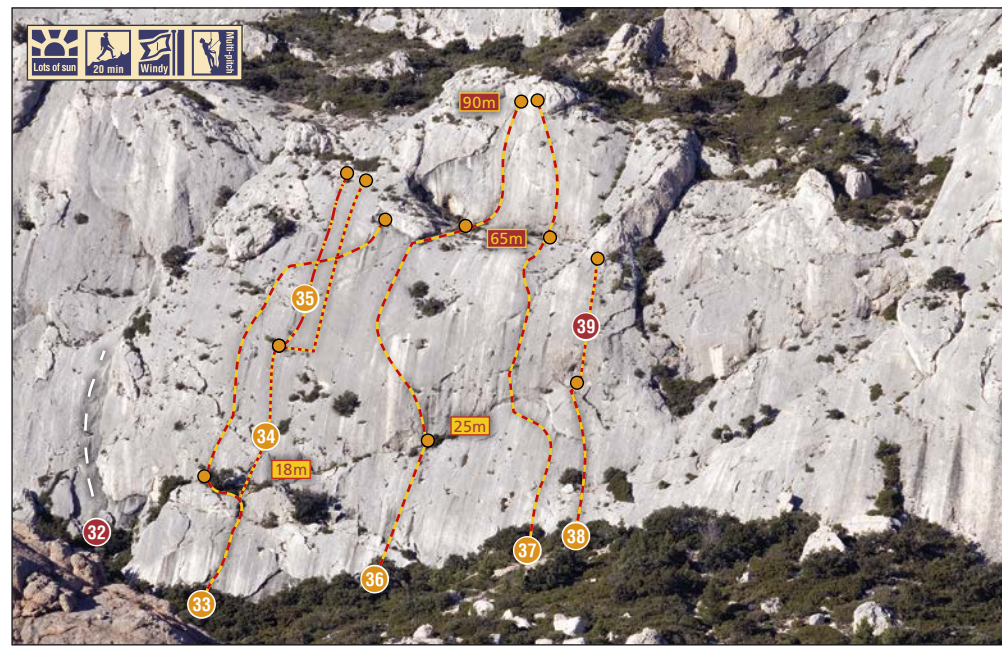
The first routes described start from a ledge up and left that is reached by an awkward chimney. The setting is very pleasant, if rather exposed. Not all the routes have been rebolted.

- 1 Panique à l'oppidum ..... 4a  
 2 Mégotine ..... 5a  
 3 La croucouniaque ..... 5a  
 4 Zig-zag orange ..... 5c  
 5 Super rognures ..... 5a  
 Start just left of the crack and go direct.  
 6 Les rognures d'angle d'Allah ..... 4c  
 An old classic up the crack-line. Some gear is needed.  
 7 Le serpent qui danse ..... 5c  
 Head to the previous route's first belay.  
 8 Émotions fortes ..... 6a

- 9 L'extension ..... 5c  
 10 Traditions respectées ..... 5c  
 11 Mélusine ..... 6a  
 12 La pollution ..... 6a  
 13 Groupies ..... 6c  
 14 Arrosoir et persil ..... 7b+  
 15 La barnett ..... 7a+  
 1) 7a+, 2) 6a.

Down and right, starting from the base of the cliff, are some longer routes, plus another selection of single-pitch offerings.

- 16 Tout doucement, tout simplement ..... 5a  
 The first line right of the flaky corner.  
 17 Krishnadalle ..... 6c+  
 18 Ciao cescou ..... 7a



- 19 La martine ..... 6b  
 1) 5c, 2) 6b. At the stance, move right to access the second pitch. A third pitch isn't equipped - grade 5aa.

- 20 La phial ..... 5c

- 21 L'Innominata ..... 6c  
 The extension to the last route.

- 22 Rondeurs africains ..... 6a+  
 Right of the grey streak to a lower-off above the white patches.

The next two climbs are popular three pitch outings crossing at the first ledge system.

- 23 La reposante ..... 6a  
 1) 5c, 2) 6a, 3) 5c. All the pitches are between 20m and 30m long.

- 24 L'extra dalle ..... 6b  
 1) 5c, 2) 6b, 3) 6a. A counter-diagonal which is similar to, but harder than, the last route.

- 25 Strange sugar ..... 6b  
 Straight to and through the 'sad' overlap at 25m. Spaced bolts.

- 26 La D.J ..... 5c  
 A right-hand line to the same lower-off.

- 27 Fissure Brown ..... 5c  
 A shorter pitch - where's the crack you may ask!

- 28 Les gosses d'aulx ..... 5c

- 29 Papy potins ..... 5c  
 30 Les gouttes d'eau ..... 5c

Starting at a lower level are two longer pitches.

- 31 Pycnostyle ..... 6a  
 A big pitch - take plenty of clips.

- 32 Voie X ..... 6b

To the right is a series of steep slabs 90m high, split by a couple of diagonal ramps, and capped by bulging rock. There are many other bolted lines here and only a small selection of the longer routes are covered below. Most have names on the rock.

- 33 Boulon le gauche ..... 5c  
 1) 4c, 2) 5c, 3) 4c. An old route with a wandering line.

- 34 La dalle en pente ..... 6a  
 1) 4c, 2) 6a, 3) 5c. Start as for the previous climb, then go direct.

- 35 Noctambules ..... 5c

- 36 La boulon le droite ..... 5c  
 1) 4a, 2) 5c, 3) 5c.

- 37 Les quatre quart ..... 5c  
 1) 4c, 2) 5a, 3) 5c.

- 38 Huit et le demi ..... 5a

- 39 Nuit couleur blues ..... 6b





## Sector Plates Dalles

An attractive area of slabs with a good set of well-bolted routes, many in the lower grades. There are some two and three-pitch offerings here as well. Almost all of the climbs have been rebolted in the not-too-distant past and, many of them are quite polished, which often makes the starts a bit tricky. The area is sheltered from the worst of the Mistral by the bushes at the cliff base.

### 1 Illuminations . . . . . 4c

The line above the big clump of bushes. A long pitch with spaced gear, the 1st bolt is particularly high.

### 2 Angelures . . . . . 4a

Another long one.

### 3 Tranquillité assurée . . . . . 4a

Take plenty of clips on this one too.

### 4 Les gemeaux jumeaux . . . . . 4c

A tiny first pitch (polished 4c) is available or just do it in one big one. The route improves with height.

### 5 Onze de cœur . . . . . 5c

A continuation to *Les gemeaux jumeaux* up the wall above.

### 6 Mal et fils . . . . . 4c

A short pitch to the left end of the ledge.

### 7 Sortilèges . . . . . 5a

Short and slippery.

### 8 Doux gates . . . . . 5a

1) 5a, 2) 4a. Two good pitches after another slippery start.

### 9 La Der . . . . . 5a

The first of a trio of testing little pitches.

### 10 37° 2 le matin . . . . . 5a

Slippery.

### 11 Paradisiac . . . . . 5a

.... and another slippery one.

### 12 Accroche cœur . . . . . 4c

A pleasant, easier line in two pitches, or extend it further by continuing up the final pitch of the next route.

### 13 Les plates dalles . . . . . 5a

1) 5a, 2) 4a, 3) 4c. A longer route that leads to the top of this wall via a couple of good stances. The second pitch tackles the left-hand side of the water streak. An excellent introduction to multi-pitch climbing.

### 14 La bibou-neneze . . . . . 5a

Like most of these, it feels quite tough for the grade.

### 15 Les pâtes fraîches . . . . . 5c

After a tough start there is an easier second pitch is available at grade 4a.

### 16 Que la fête commence . . . . . 6a

Start up the groove that forms the left-hand side of the tower on the right-hand side of the slab.

### 17 Le souci . . . . . 4a

A very long pitch, or use the belay/lower-off on the right. The route continues in three more pitches - up to 5c - to the top of the Aiguille. The state of the fixed gear is not known.

### 18 Cadeaux merveilleux . . . . . 5c

### 19 Bisounours . . . . . 5c

To the right is the line of *Salad des fruits*, 5c - a top-rope problem.

### 20 Petite fleur . . . . . 5c

Nice climbing with a tricky crux. There is a much easier second pitch (3+) if required.

### 21 Clops ou pas clops . . . . . 7b

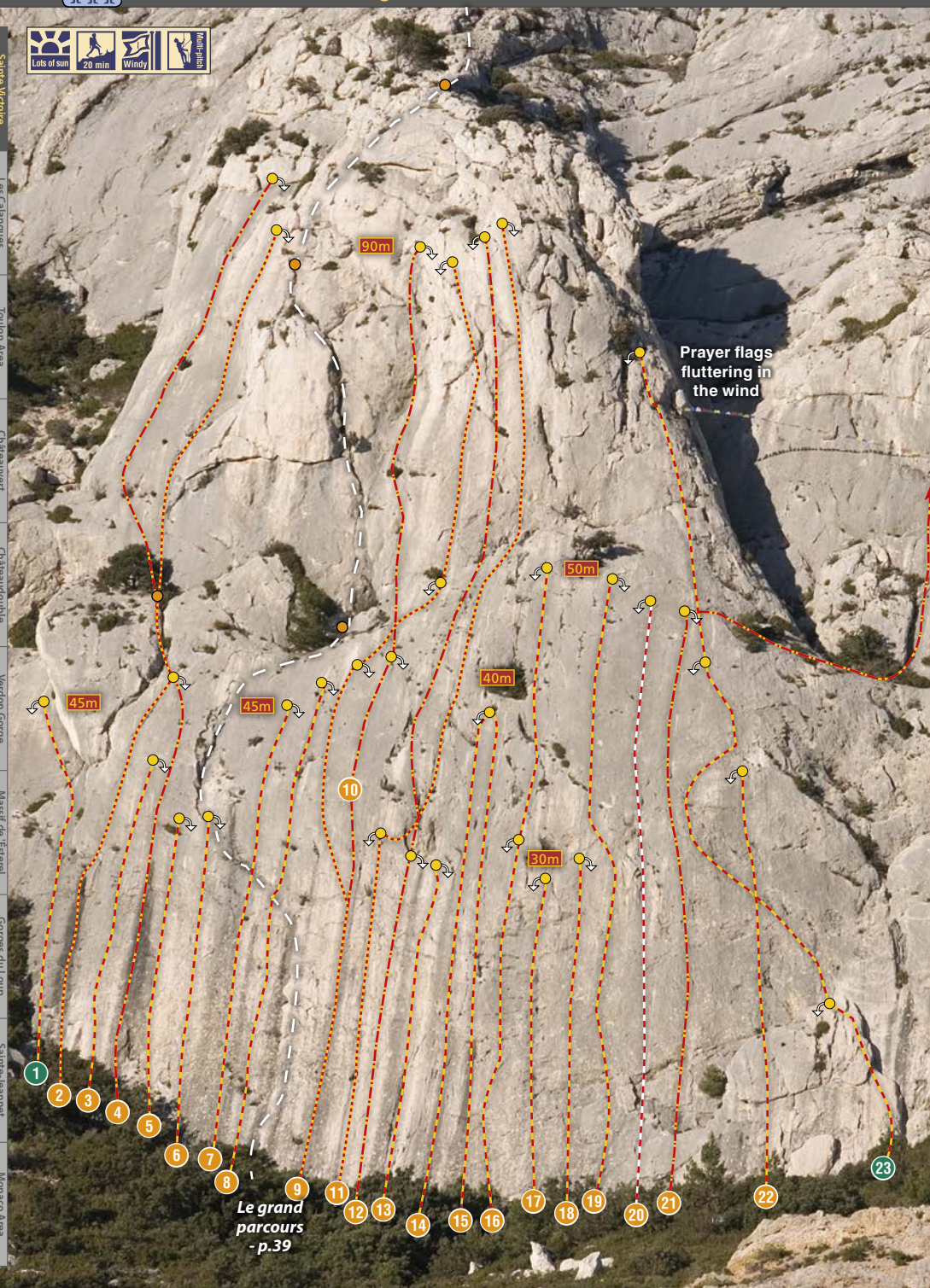
### 22 Boulevard du futur . . . . . 7a+

### 23 Uterus . . . . . 7a

### 24 Sésame . . . . . 7b







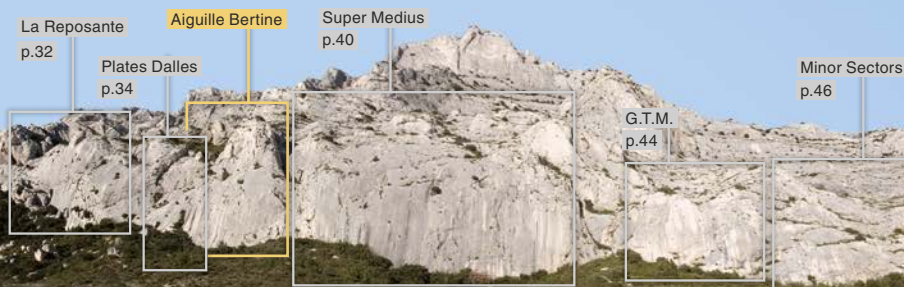
## Aiguille Bertine

This tower offers a fine selection of routes in the orange grades, a nice mixture of shortish multi-pitch routes and some huge single-pitch ones. Double ropes and a heap of quickdraws might help here. As is often the case here the routes are rather packed in though most have their names painted at the base. Wandering between lines is pretty easy mind!

- 1 Galop d'essai** ..... 4c  
Start just right of the bushes, trend left when it steepens.
- 2 U.L.K.** ..... 6a+  
1) 5a, 2) 6a+. Start up the left-hand of the two short dark streaks.
- 3 Little last one** ..... 5c
- 4 Deloripous des papiers.** ..... 5c  
1) 5a, 2) 5c. Start up the right-hand of the two short dark streaks and continue past a lower-off to a stance at a ledge with large tree. A 2nd pitch tackles the centre of the slab above and left of the tree.
- 5 Acidofilus actif** ..... 5c
- 6 Directe du grand parcours.** ..... 5a  
Go straight to the belay at the end of the first pitch of the classic.
- 7 Innominata 2** ..... 5c
- 8 Fantastique greasque** ..... 5c
- 9 Mortelles randonnées.** ..... 5c  
1) 5a, 2) 5c. Keep left where the bolt-lines split, then move right from the belay, crossing the next route for the upper pitch.
- 10 Requiem 74** ..... 6a  
1) 5c, 2) 6a. A direct version of the previous climb; also two pitches long, but a notch harder.
- 11 La pimprenelle et le pervers chevelu** ..... 5c  
1) 5c, 2) 4c, 3) 5c. A route tackling the right-hand side of the tower.



- 12 Basket blues** ..... 6a+  
1) 5a, 2) 4c, 3) 6a+. Covers the same area with a harder top pitch.
- 13 Parcours sentez** ..... 5c
- 14 Psycho d'élite** ..... 5a  
A nice piece of climbing.
- 15 Vagabondages** ..... 5a  
Start just right of the black streak.
- 16 La denea depeuf** ..... 5a  
1) 4c. An excellent 30m pitch in its own right. 2) 5a.
- 17 Banal song** ..... 5a  
A crimpy little number - well, not so little, but deffo crimpy.
- 18 La bof.** ..... 5c
- 19 La kaspate** ..... 5c  
1) 5c, 2) 4c. The second pitch is good at the grade.
- 20 La vouivre** ..... 5c  
A huge pitch with spaced bolts - the odd nut might plug some gaps and help you keep calm.
- 21 Les commandos** ..... 5c  
1) 5c, 2) 2, 3) 5a. An old classic and still popular. The third pitch is up the right-hand line on the slab away to the right.
- 22 Bonjour Roger, merci Ginette** ..... 5c
- 23 Les masques de Pierre** ..... 4c  
1) 4a, 2) 4c, 3) 4a. A long easy route up the right edge of the face. There is another pitch but it is short on fixed gear.







## Le Grand Parours

A Big Course indeed! Six hours up and down is a good time for an efficient team and a UK grade of about **E1 5b** would be appropriate. There is a bit of old fixed-kit in the route, though a small UK rack and a few slings will be found essential, especially on the upper crack-systems and to protect the easier middle pitches. Don't forget the water and the sunscreen.

### 9 Le grand parours . . . . . **LSO** **5c**

The major classic of the mountain, up the striking ridge. The lower section is fully bolted, the middle section is a bit vague and the final part need nuts/slings to supplement the old pegs.

*Photo opposite.*

**1) - 4) 5a.** Starting at the name on the rock, four pitches lead up the Aiguille Bertine to the col at its top.

**5) Easy** scrambling leads up to ledges below a steeper wall.

**6) to 8)** Take the easiest line up cracks and slabs to reach ledges below the steeper upper section. (Trace Noire crosses here so familiarise yourself for the descent). There is no fixed gear on this section. It can be by-passed by walking around to the right.

**9) 5a.** Climb up cracks to a belay beneath a prominent roof.

**10) - 13)** Four more pitches up the superb ridge lead to big ledges beneath the long upper crack.

**14) 5a.** Tackle the wide crack chimney past plenty of fixed gear and a couple of awkward moves.

**15) 5c.** Follow the left-hand branch on the 'Y' past a tricky section to a good ledge.

**16) 5a.** Another steep pull up flakes gains a wider gully system then continue up and back right to a belay below a rib. There are bolts on other routes that cross this pitch which can be clipped.

**17) 4a.** Climb the rib to gain easy ground and the summit.

**Descent -** Walk along the summit ridge towards the Croix de Provence to the west.

Option 1 - Pick out a steep gully with some chains and drop down this to gain the Trace Noire.  
Option 2 - Continue to a large cave/tunnel on the left - Le Tunnel du Garagai - a short distance before the Croix. Scramble through this (steep and slippery, but easy enough) to the open slopes, then bear left down scree to pick up black paint-marks and cairns that indicate the Trace Noire. Follow this as it descends eastwards and cross the route of ascent to drop through the cliffs at the short rocky step of Le Pas de l'Elephant (look out for his footprint). DO NOT be tempted to try and descend any earlier - cliffs (and big ones at that) run below the full length of the Trace Noire.



Adrian Berry under the roof starting pitch 10 of *Le grand parours* (5c) - *this page* - Sainte Victoire's most famous route. Beyond, the rock goes on for miles. Photo: Alan James





## Sector Super Medius

The show-piece of the crag has a set of desperate face routes and the occasional easier line squeezing between them. All the routes here feel hard for the grade. Originally many of these were protected with spaced 8mm bolts and home-made wire threads. Even with modern gear they remain tough and spooky undertakings - steel fingers and the crispest of foot-work may see you succeed! A small rack or wires may be found of use to plug the gaps between the bolts, or as a way of extricating yourself if it all becomes a bit too much.

- 1 La mouche** ..... 3+  
1) 3, 2) 2, 3) 3+. A gentle lead that skirts the main event. Not typical of the area but gets you to the top! Some gear will be found useful to protect the traverse sections.
- 2 La nef des fous** ..... 6a+  
A direct version of the loopy section of the previous climb.
- 3 La tse-tse** ..... 5c  
1) 5c, 2) 5c. A nice two-pitch climb up the edge of the wall.
- 4 Bestagnasse verolique** ..... 7a+  
The first of the toughies.
- 5 L'ovni** ..... 6c  
Fine and sustained. A right-hand variation is made a tiny bit easier by managing to avoid the fierce crux-moves - 6b+.
- 6 La sixième metatarsien** ..... 6c  
A big pitch passing the right-hand edge of the overlap high on the wall.
- 7 La direct des aromates** ..... 5c  
A fine pitch following the juggy flakes and continuation groove.  
*Photo on page 30.*

- 8 Les aromats** ..... 4c  
1) 4c, 2) 4c, 3) 4c, 4) 4a. Devious, smelly (in a nice way!) and very worthwhile. Trend right to enter the groove-line and climb it to a stance on the left. Move right then up and back left until a short traverse reaches a good stance. The fine slab leads to more ledges and a final pitch round the right-hand side of the capping bulges. Descend by abseil or by following the Trace Noire away to the right to the only gap in the cliff line.
- 9 Imagine** ..... 5c  
Cuts out all the weaving about on the first pitches of *Les aromats*.
- 10 La grand lessive** ..... 6a
- 11 Annabella** ..... 4c  
The rugged slab above the next climb offers an easy extension or an alternative finish to *Les aromats*.
- 12 Hyper medusée** ..... 7a+  
Climb to a ledge then move out right in search of difficulties.
- 13 Hyper medius** ..... 6c  
A counter diagonal to the previous climb, though with bolts that are even more spaced than is the norm round here. A superb pitch and a 'must-do' if you are up to it.
- 14 Super medius** ..... 7a+  
"A magnificent bold route. Highly improbable." Pete Livesey 1980. Not a bad effort for 1974. Sustained and technical, the short may struggle to link the distant holds.
- 15 Niki chagrin d'humeur** ..... 7c  
A more modern variation on a theme.
- 16 Le medius** ..... 7c  
Desperate - an even better effort for 1974!
- 17 L'ève les mains** ..... ?  
An unknown quantity up the vague grey streak - though doubtless it is at least as desperate as the stuff to the left!







**18 Levitation** ..... 6c+  
Spaced bolting, the crux, just below the lower-off is memorable!

**19 Gouroumaniak** ..... 6c+  
Protected by older bolts, and therefore not popular.

**20 Un petit bout d'inconnu** ..... 6b  
A bit of an unknown quantity - according to the name.

**21 La pagode** ..... 6a  
An easier line, and very worthwhile too. 70m rope essential - rack of nuts very useful!

**22 Les fagots** ..... 5c  
1) 5c, 2) 5c. A worthwhile easier route, though the bolts are a bit spaced. A small selection of nuts might help calm the nerves. The first bolt is a worrying distance from the ground.  
*Photo on page 45.*

**23 Un éclair d'éternité** ..... 6a  
Start up *Les fagots*, then move right and do a bit of weaving about to link the best holds.

**24 Arpèges** ..... 7a  
The more direct version - tough and a bit of an eliminate.

**25 L'inflation** ..... 7a  
1) 7a, 2) 6b+. Climb the right-hand side of a shallow circular feature past a couple of shrubby patches, continue up the tough wall to a tiny stance - spaced bolts. Take the left-hand line to finish.

**26 Grill homard** ..... 7a  
The longer, harder right-hand finish is more in keeping with the first pitch of *L'inflation*.

**27 Mélanges** ..... 6c

**28 Doyouspitingliche** ..... 6c+  
Great name, superb route, but a very long one.

**29 Bismila** ..... 6b+  
A shorter pitch passing a shrubby ledge early on.

**30 La gassi touil** ..... 6b  
1) 6b, 2) 6b, 3) 6a. The full height of the wall.

**31 Direct de la gassi touil** ..... 6c  
1) 6c, 2) 6b+. A more direct version to up the ante a bit!

**32 Le spleen** ..... 6b+

**33 Un éclair d'absurdité** ..... 6a  
1) 6a, 2) 6a. Start up the rather shrubby rock to a stance then continue up cleaner rock above.

**34 Le chas** ..... 5c  
1) 5c, 2) 5c, 3) 5c. The easiest line here - devious and worthwhile.

**35 Messaline** ..... 6b

**36 Bengale 99** ..... 7a+

**37 L'ensigienord** ..... 6b+  
Start up the wide, grey streak.

**38 Pet des anges** ..... 7c

**39 La tamanrasset** ..... 6b+  
The classic groove-line is a must do - though despite that no-one ever does it!

**40 Voie du Bout** ..... 7a  
The last decent line on the wall. Start up the vegetated flake.

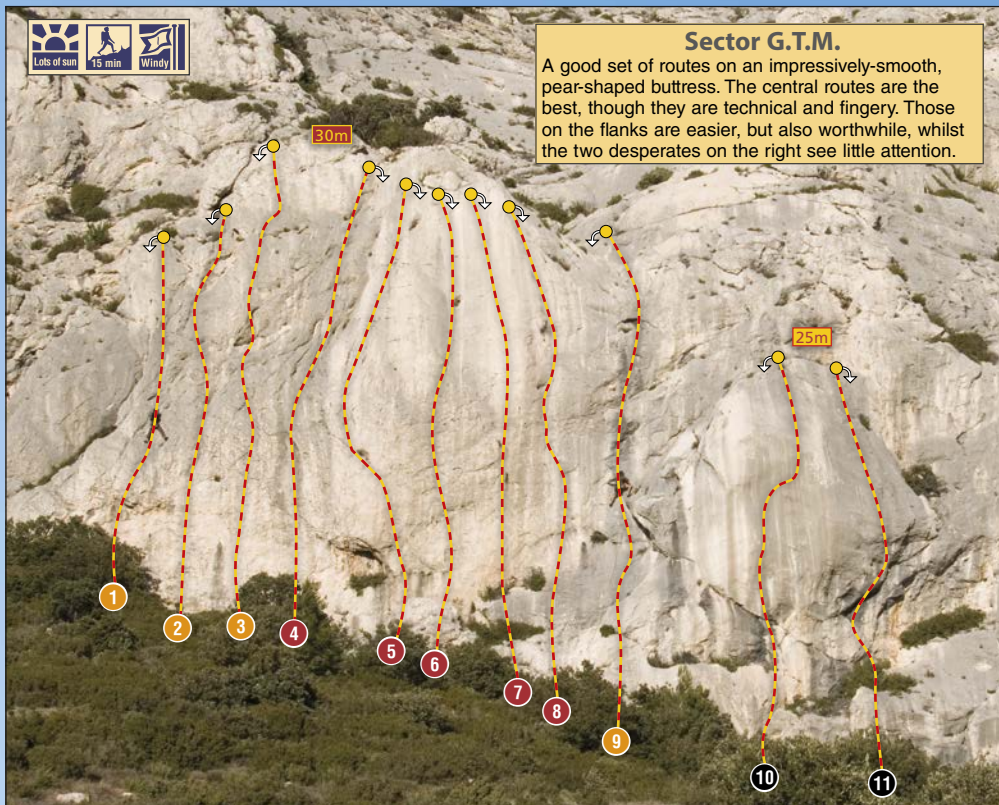


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Super Medius

Minor Sectors p.46

G.T.M. p.44

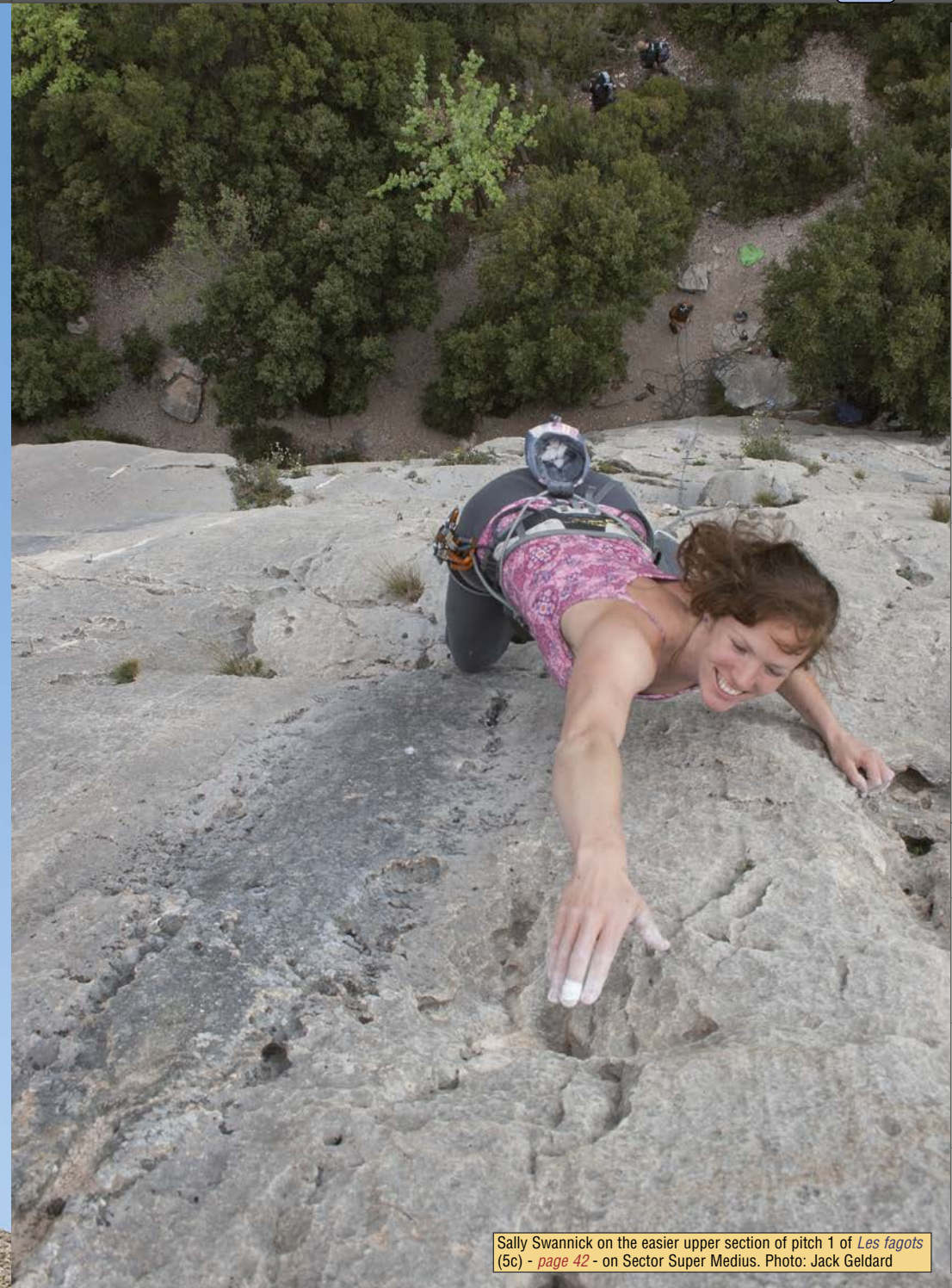
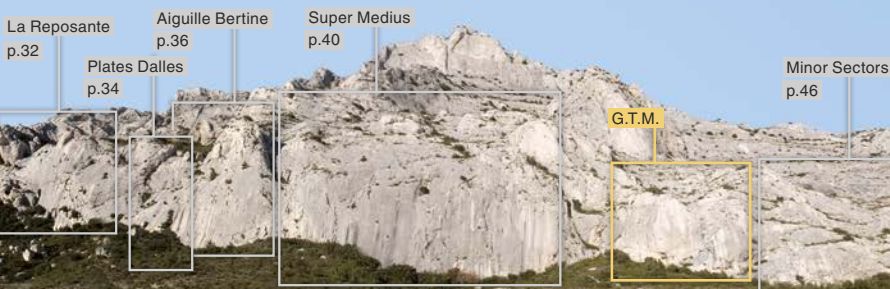




**Sector G.T.M.**  
A good set of routes on an impressively-smooth, pear-shaped buttress. The central routes are the best, though they are technical and fingery. Those on the flanks are easier, but also worthwhile, whilst the two desperates on the right see little attention.

- 1 **Renaissance** . . . . . 5c
- 2 **Bisous Glaces** . . . . . 6a  
Nice with only a couple of tricky moves.
- 3 **G.T.M.** . . . . . 5c  
A good starter on this section of the wall.
- 4 **Vents de folie** . . . . . 6b  
A tough move between bolts 2 and 3.
- 5 **Caravan'serail** . . . . . 6b  
Superb crimping and pumpy climbing which is a bit easier if you visit the big pocket rather than climbing direct.

- 6 **Les crêpes volantes** . . . . . 6c  
*Photo on page 29.*
- 7 **Les vèpres collantes** . . . . . 6c+
- 8 **Crépuscule** . . . . . 6b  
A committing move leftwards at half-height.
- 9 **Shadow Man** . . . . . 5c
- 10 **La boule** . . . . . 8a+  
A Sainte Victoire 8a+ - about as blank as they come!
- 11 **Goodigood** . . . . . 7b+



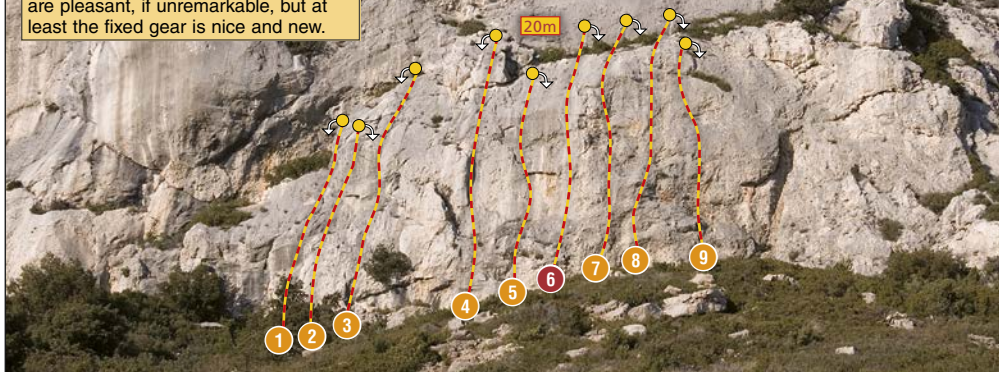
Sally Swannick on the easier upper section of pitch 1 of *Les fagots* (5c) - page 42 - on Sector Super Medius. Photo: Jack Geldard





### Sector Nino Ferrer

The latest section of the cliff hereabouts to be developed, the routes are pleasant, if unremarkable, but at least the fixed gear is nice and new.

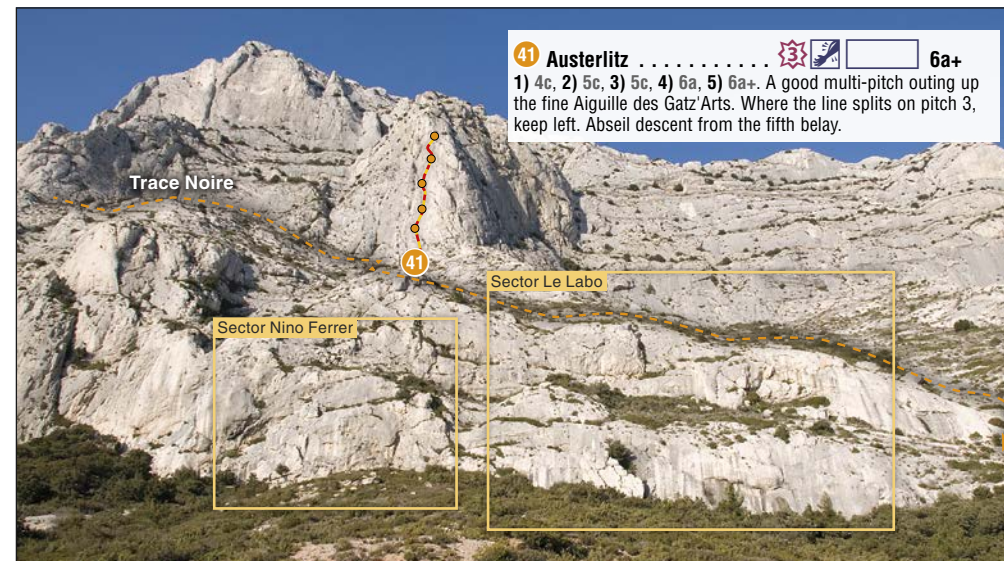


- 1 Le sud ..... 5c
- 2 Le blues de chien ..... 5c
- 3 Aloina de Jesus ..... 5a
- 4 Joseph Joseph ..... 5c
- 5 Les morceaux de fer ..... 5a
- 6 Chanson pour Nathalie ..... 6b
- 7 Ouessant ..... 6a+
- 8 Mirza ..... 6a+
- 9 Le téléphone ..... 6a+

- 10 P'tit loup ..... 4a
- 11 Comme un avion ..... 4a
- 12 Shanghai express ..... 5a
- 13 Ricou ..... 5a
- 14 New York Juillet ..... 5a  
Two short pitches 5a and 4c.
- 15 L'oubliée ..... 4c
- 16 Willypiou ..... 4c
- 17 Fastoch ..... 4b
- 18 Mat sup ..... 5c

### Sector Le Labo

A set of short and quite tough routes with a bit of a mishmash of bolts. A place to get plenty done if time is tight maybe.



- 41 Austerlitz ..... 6a+  
1) 4c, 2) 5c, 3) 5c, 4) 6a, 5) 6a+. A good multi-pitch outing up the fine Aiguille des Gatz Arts. Where the line splits on pitch 3, keep left. Abseil descent from the fifth belay.

- 19 Ga ..... 5c
- 20 ZIZITOP ..... 6b+
- 21 Agressions furtives ..... 6c+
- 22 Le rose est mis ..... 6b+
- 23 Orabidoo ..... 6b
- 24 Base 1 ..... 6c
- 25 S.K.F. .... 5c
- 26 Dur! Dur! ..... 6c
- 27 Que calor ..... 5c
- 28 La bavure ..... 5a
- 29 La parade a papa ..... 5b
- 30 Les papys ..... 5c
- 31 T'es beau, Thibaut ..... 5c
- 32 Anthony ..... 4c
- 33 Loïc ..... 5c

- 36 Totem ..... 4c
- 37 La Lino ..... 4b
- 38 La S ..... 4a
- 39 Crin blanc ..... 4a
- 40 La petite sirène ..... 4a

### Sector Totem et Tabou

A pleasant collection of slabby routes up and right from the other sectors.



Up and right is a small sector with some lower-grade routes.

- 34 Solomen ..... 4b
- 35 Tabou ..... 4c